



Nursing Practice & Patient Advocacy Alert

STAFFING IN THE NEWBORN NURSERY

QUESTION: Is a hospital that provides maternity services required to have a well baby nursery or can it mandate rooming-in? If the hospital has a well baby nursery, who should staff the unit?

RESPONSE: A hospital must have a well baby nursery. The Department of Health Services has cited hospitals in the past for not making a well baby nursery available to the new moms and their infants. According to DHS, if a mother wants to send her baby to the nursery that option must be available. Hospitals cannot mandate rooming in. In addition, the nurses' station does not qualify as a nursery.

If an infant is present in the nursery, a RN must also be present in that location at all times. A RN down the hall doing couplet care does not qualify. A nursing assistant alone cannot staff the nursery. Again, this is a citable offense. In addition, there must be one licensed nurse for eight or fewer infants. If there are nine infants, there must be two licensed staff.

If you have further questions, need more information or help please call CNA's Nursing Practice Program at 510/273-2200.

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